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COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES DUE TO LEXICAL DIFFERENCES IN NOUNS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF YOUSAFZAI AND BANUCHI DIALECTS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to present the vocabulary differences between Yousafzai and Banuchi dialects of Pashto language. As there are different words in both dialects which are used for the same things due to which speakers of both dialects face communication difficulties. The objective of the current study is to find out communication difficulties in both dialects in the use of nouns through a comparative study. The researcher has conducted focused group interviews and used audio recording as a tool to collect data from the respondents. The data was collected from both male and female to fulfil the integrity of the research. The data was analyzed and presented in tabulated and graphical form. The results of the research illustrate the level of lexical differences between both dialects. It is expected that the findings of this research will present a set of general ideas for the solution of communication difficulties among Pashto speakers of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Keywords: Yousafzai, Banuchi, Dialects, Communication Difficulties, Lexical Differences

Introduction

This study is based on communication difficulties due to dialectical differences. The purpose of this comparative study is to search out lexical variations between Yusafzai and Banuchi dialects of Pashto language in order to critically analyze the differences and to mark the difficulties faced by the speakers of both dialects while communicating with each other.

According to Griffin (2012), there are more than one twenty definitions of communication. But still a question, that what communication actually is, brings a huge controversy with itself; therefore, there is no such definition of communication which can be scaled at the top of all other explanations of the term communication. Griffin (2012) and (Afaq et al., 2023) state that, "There is no single, absolute essence of communication that adequately explains the phenomena we study. Such a definition does not exist; neither is it merely awaiting, the next brightest communication scholar to nail it down once and for all" (p.6). The above statement about communication shows the idea that there is no basic and solo explanation which clearly answers the controversy of communication. Different scholars define communication differently, Griffin (2012) states that "Communication is the relational process of creating and interpreting message that elicit a response" (p.6). Thus, communication is the social route through which message or signals can be formed and understood by the sender and receiver, due to which a reaction can be produced. According to Barker (2006) communication is something about sending and receiving information. The word "Communication" has different meanings, but basically it is derived from the Latin word "Communis". Communis means "Common" "Comunism" and "community" (p.9).

These words are interrelated with one another, because communication needs a community. Therefore it is a process in which information is sent by a sender to the receiver through a medium. After receiving information from sender, the receiver then decodes the message and sends a response. Thus communication plays a vital role in comprehension of one's message with three different stages. These three stages are action, information and relationships. The first stage of communication, which is action, can be defined as the purpose for sharing information, which is the material, recorded by the mind from the outward situations. Information can be accepted by the mind only when it is comprehended. The next step is the relationship between the sender and receiver which can create through verbal, vocal and physical behavior (Barker (2006) and Gul et al.,2024). Therefore, communication has various ways through which people communicate with each other. Verbal and nonverbal communications are the types of communication. Verbal communication is a kind of communication in which message is conveyed orally or in a written form. Oral communication deals with speech conversation, voiced dialog and spoken words, while written communication refers to written signs and symbols.

Research Questions

1. To what extent lexical differences exist in Banuchi and Yusufzai dialects, especially in terms of nouns?
2. What problems are faced by the speakers of the two dialects due to lexical differences?

Literature Review

According to Mackenzie (1987) Pashto is the national language of Afghanistan known as Dari language and the home language of Pathans who live in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan and Pathans living in Baluchistan. Pashto is an Indo-Iranian language of the East Iranian branch. As a national language of Afghanistan, it is spoken in the eastern, central, southeastern, southwestern and western regions. In the eastern region, it is spoken in Nangarhar, Laghman, and Kunar. In the central region, Pashto is spoken in Kabul, Logar and Wardak. In southeastern region it is spoken in Khost, Paktiya, Paktika and Ghazni and in southwestern region Pashto is spoken in Kandahar, Helmand, Uruzgan, Zabul, Herat and in Farah. In Pakistan, it is spoken in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as well as in northeastern Baluchistan, including the city of Quetta (David, 2014 and Gul et al.,2022(a)).

The term Pashto/Pakhto has developed from several phases to the current shape. The word Pashto in relation to orientation might be credited to the Pashtun tribe itself. In Regvida and Osta the Pashto language referred to Pakt/Bakt nation. The Greek historian Herodotus (as cited in Isabel, 2016), describes the residence of Pakt nation as the beach of Indus River. Later on, the Pakt/Bakt changed into Pakht/Bakht and their language was named Pakhto and Bakhto, and gradually it was termed as a Pakhto/Pashto.

The development of Pashto language is not clear. There are no documents regarding the evaluation of Pashto language. Therefore, the researchers and historians have come up with different ideas. Their research gave birth to different theories about Pakhtun tribe. One theory argues that Pathans are the missing tribe of Israel, while another theory explains the idea that Pathans belong to Aryans, which is showing that the Pashto language is derived from Sanskrit which is related to Aryan group. The culture, belief, morals and ethics of Pakhtuns are similar to that of Aryan (see Jazeb, 2009; Gul et al.,2022(b) and Khan et al.,2025).

Proto Indo-European group is further divided into Western branch and Eastern Branch. Western Branch contains *Germanic Tocharian, Greek, Anatolia* and Western European. Eastern European consists of *Celtic Italic*; which refers to *Celtic* and *Italic*. The Eastern Branch contains *Baltic, Albanian, Armenian, Slavonic* and *Aryan*. Aryan is sub-divided into Iranian and Indian. Pashto language is connected to Indo Europeans branch Aryans, therefore it is described in detail (Henry, 1983,p7). The languages of Aryans are spoken in Iran, Afghanistan Pakistan and India. The linguists now divided the Aryans branch into three branches. These branches are *Irani, Dard* and *Hind Arya*. The Iranian branch contains ancient *Persian* modern *Persian, Kardi, Balochi, Pashto, Bakhtri, Saghdi, Ghulcha, Wekri, Srikhweli* and *Mekhani* languages. The Dard branch is further divided into sub-branches which are *Kafir, Khwar* or *chitrali* and *Shna*. The Kafir is then divided into *Bashghuli, Classa, Gwarbati* and the Shna consists of *Kohistani* and *Kashmiri* languages. The Indo-Irani divided into *Marhati, Bengoli, Indian, Urdu, Puhari, Punjabhi, Sindhi, and Jehtari* languages. (Isabel, 2016 and Habib et al.,2024).

In Pakistan Pashto is spoken by the Pathans (Mir, 1983), which is divided into many dialects. There are two major dialects of Pashto *Western Pashto* which is spoken in Afghanistan and in the capital Kabul, and the *Eastern Pashto* spoken in northeastern Pakistan. Most of the speakers speak these two dialects (David, 2014 and Sajjad et al.,2023). Pashto is the principal language of Kohat District, except in Shakardarra and the belts with Indus. According to Grierson (1877) the northern tribe of the Afghans speaks South - Western dialect of Pashto is that of the Khattaks. They are strongest in the district of Kohat, but are also found in Peshawar and in Bannu. A settlement of the Saghri Sept of this tribe is found near Makhad on the banks of the Indus in the south - west corner of the Attock district of the Punjab. These also speak the south western dialect of Pashto, while the Chachh Pathans of the same district speak the north eastern dialect.

Yusafzai is the standard dialect of Pashto language (Qayyum, 1976), which has been given preference among all other dialects on the basis of their tribes' population and number of speakers. It is considered more superior than the other Pashto dialects due to its wide use of dialect across KP. According to Mir (1983) Yusafzai

dialect has achieved the rank of standard dialect because it exists in written form as literary work magazines, newspaper and history records are written in this dialect. This dialect also covers the electronic media. In some cases, when the speakers of other dialects communicate in Yusufzai dialect, they face difficulties while interacting with each other and speak a mixed form of both dialects. In such a situation the speakers of both dialects, use such words which are not available in both dialects. This mixed form creates barriers in understanding the exact message of a sender, which can be a hurdle for the speakers of both dialects.

Banuchi dialect is the branch of Khattak /Khandahar group, which is inter-connected to the other dialects of its group. But still this dialect has some different features due to which, it is individualized (Jazab, 2009). Yusufzai is the dialect of Pashto language, spoken by the speakers, who reside in Peshawar district and the surrounding areas of Peshawar, while in Afghanistan it is spoken in Nangarhar and the surroundings area of Nangarhar. It is spoken in Mardan, Charsadda, Sawabi and Nowshera and in the villages near these areas (Grierson, 1877 and Gul et al.,2023).

Banuchi as pathans are the people who talk in Banuchi dialect. This is a huge tribe, living in Bannu district. According to Ayyub (1997) Banuchi's population is almost one million. Therefore roundabouts 10, 00000 speakers speak this dialect. But in the light of Agricultural Statistics of KP for (1999-2000) data for the above-mentioned figure for Banuchi population is not accurate, and the actual population of Bannuchi is 682921.

There are many studies which were conducted comparatively on two languages, dialects and accents, but no one has conducted a comparative study on these two dialects, Yusufzai and Banuchi. In this sense, this is primary research, and the research will use first handed data for the analysis of this comparative study and will provide a gap for other scholars too who are interested to conduct research on more dialects in Pashto language. Comparative analysis of two languages, dialect or accent seem the most appropriate technique for analyzing the differences, similarity and the changes in the status of language or dialect.

Methods

In this study the researcher has used mixed research approaches that are both qualitative and quantitative. Quantitative approach is more impartial, wide-ranging and precise in nature (Nunan; 1992). But according to Bagdan and Biklen, qualitative approach is generally a method, which is based on induction (cited in Castellen, 2010; Ishtiaq et al.,2021and Samar et al.,2025). This study deals with the mixed method where the researcher has analyzed the data statistically as quantitative research but the data for analysis has been collected qualitatively via group focused interviews as well as the differences between both dialects have been presented in a graphic way and in tabulated form. Furthermore, this study adapted the comparative study technique because, in comparative

study two factors, variables or characteristics are compared against each other in terms of their effectiveness, conclusion and results (Silverman, 2001). Following study compares the communication problems between the Yusafzai and Banuchi dialects. There problems of communication were compared against each other, though two different set of factors under the heading of communication. Thus, the study used a comparative approach for conducting the thesis.

The researcher has used focus group interviews as a tool for data collection. The focus group interview is a qualitative method for information analysis (Muhammad, 2010). A focus group is a group comprising of people with certain characteristics who emphasis on discussions on a given matter or topic, the group of people is usually between six and ten in number, who are fetched together by a trained moderator (the researcher) to discover attitudes and insights, moods and notions about a topic (Muhammad, 2010 and Habib et al., 2025).

The collected data is presented in graphs in order to compare the gathered information. According to Rasel (2013) the graphical presentation is useful in comparative analysis, because through the graphs one can easily understand the whole process. Thus, the graphical arrangements make the information comprehensive in a quick view. It can be helpful in making decisions about the procedure with the help of observation.

In this study, speakers of Yousafzai and Bunuchi dialects are the target population. The target population is divided into groups in order to gather information. The population selected from Peshawar city is based on four groups and each group contains ten speakers. The groups of speakers are selected from Girls College, Boys College and random people (male and female). Similarly, the data has been gathered from Bannu city from four groups of speakers and each group consists of ten speakers. These four groups were speakers from Girls College speakers from Boys College and random speakers male and females' groups separately. Therefore, a total of forty speakers of each dialect are interviewed to achieve the objectives of present study.

Data Analysis

In this section both dialects are lexically compared through noun words with the help of tables and figures. The following table shows dialectical differences of Pashto language through comparative study of both target dialects in the use of nouns.

Table 1

Nouns	Yusafzai Dialect	Banuchi Dialect	Status
Heart	Zera	Zera	Similar
Eyes	Sthargey	Sthargey	Similar
Boy	Alak	Werka	Different
Bee	Machai	Michiye	little different

Cow	Ghwa	Gho	little different
Bamboo	Banrras	Bosh	Different
Pillow	Balakht	Bolasht	little different
Window	Karkey	Karkiye	little different
flock of sheep	Gwara	Ramma	Different
Farmer	Zameendar	Mashakati	Different
Leaf	Panra	Pakha	Different
Milk	Pai	Piye	little different
Mouth	Khula	Khula	Similar
Fingers	Guthey	Guthey	Similar
Bangles	Bangri	Seeli	Different
Arm	Mat	Mat	Similar
Sheep	Gadda	Arra	Different
Ball	Pandos	Tapis	Different
Spit	Thokarey	Vizshgey	Different
Night	Shpa	Shpa	Similar
Yard	Gholey	Thalai	Different
Chair	Kursey	Kursi	little different
Balloon	Pukanrai	Dabanriye	little different
Elbow	Sangal	Sangal	Similar
Stick	Chukka	Lashta	Different
Girl	Jinai	Werkiye	Different
Monkey	Shado	Bizo	Different
Glasses	Chashmey	Chashmey	Similar
Cheeks	Anangi	Baghun	Different
Sand	Shaga	Shaga	Similar
Grass	Gaya	Khwar	Different
Horse	Aspa	Ospa	little different
Butter	Kuch	Kuch	Similar
Monday	Gul	Dreyam	Different
Wind	Selai	Eshma	Different
Cat	Pisho	Bali	Different
Face	Makh	Makh	Similar
Broom	Jharoo	Rebaz	Different
Goat	Chelai	Wuza	Different
Niece	Wrera	Wrera	Similar
Pitcher	Mangey	Garai	Different
Scarf	Paroney	Parkai	Different
Gravy	tharkarey/pakhkarey	Gundanr	Different

Rice	Roojey	Wrizshy	little
Thursday	Ziarat	Odina	different
Fan	Pakey	Beza	Different
Swing	Tal	Zangeya	Different
Clock	Garai	Gariye	little
			different
Clothes	Jaamey	Khatey	Different
Grapes	Kwar	Angeeron	Different
Squirrel	Bilongrey	korri bali	Different
Lipstick	Laalai	Geliye	Different
Beans	kalool/shparr	Kurkhey	Different
Ankle	Gitey	Shangara	Different
Lock	Thala	Jandra	Different
Locket	aamel/ambel	Mana	Different
Snake	Maar	Manger	Different
Morning	Sahar	Sabomal	Different
Quilt	Brasthan	Sheerak	Different
Thread	Thaar	Maza	Different
Apricot	Khurmanrey	Mandathey	Different
Aeroplane	Alwathaka	Joz	Different
Wednesday	Shoro	Pinzam	Different
Saturday	Khali	Awal	Different
Tuesday	Naha	Salaram	Different
Sunday	Itwar	Mayora	Different
Friday	Juma	Jima	little
			different
Pillar	Sthan	Mata	Different
Meal	Doddey	Mariye	Different
Animal	Zanawar	Zanawar	Similar
Mama	Bebey	Addey	Different
Earth	Zmaka	Mzaka	little
			different
ear-rings	Walai	Didey	Different
Hen	Charga	Charga	Similar
Rain	Baraan	Barom	little
			different
Crow	Kargha	Lagara	Different
acridothers(mynah)	Khaaro	Maynoka	Different
Door	War	Thamba	Different
Cotton	Malooch	Karbeskiye	Different
Spinach	Saag	Soba	Different
Turtle	sham shati	Shakarthat	Different
		i	
Leech	jok/rozsha	Zshawuriye	Different

Bat	Khaperak	Kotthpez	Different
Nest	Jala	Digol	Different
Pecock	Thawus	moi	Different
		margha	
Banana	Kela	Kesa	Different
Cucumber	Badrang	Badrang	Similar
Flour	Orra	Dirra	Different
Melon	Khatakey	Kharbiza	Different
Deer	sawa/osai	Lakashuvie	Different
Fox	Lombarra	Threrri	Different
Quail	Marraz	Bater	Different
Wasp	sra machai	Bambara	Different
Raisins	Oskey	Mamiz	Different
Orange	Malta	Malta	Similar
Okra	Bhindi	Bhindi	Similar
Almond	Badaam	Badom	little different
Mango	Aam	Aam	Similar
Wrist	Marrwand	Marrmand	Different
Throat	gala/mazghey	Makandai	Different

The above table presents the nouns with translations in both dialects. After the comparison of nouns of Yusafzai dialect with Banuchi dialect, the researcher found them in three statuses, which are similar, little different and different. Therefore, some of these words are comparatively different from each other while some are of little difference. But the majority words in both dialects are totally different from each other. Their statuses and values are shown below.

Table 2

Status	Value	Percentage %
Similar	18	18
Different	68	68
Little Different	14	14
Total	100	100

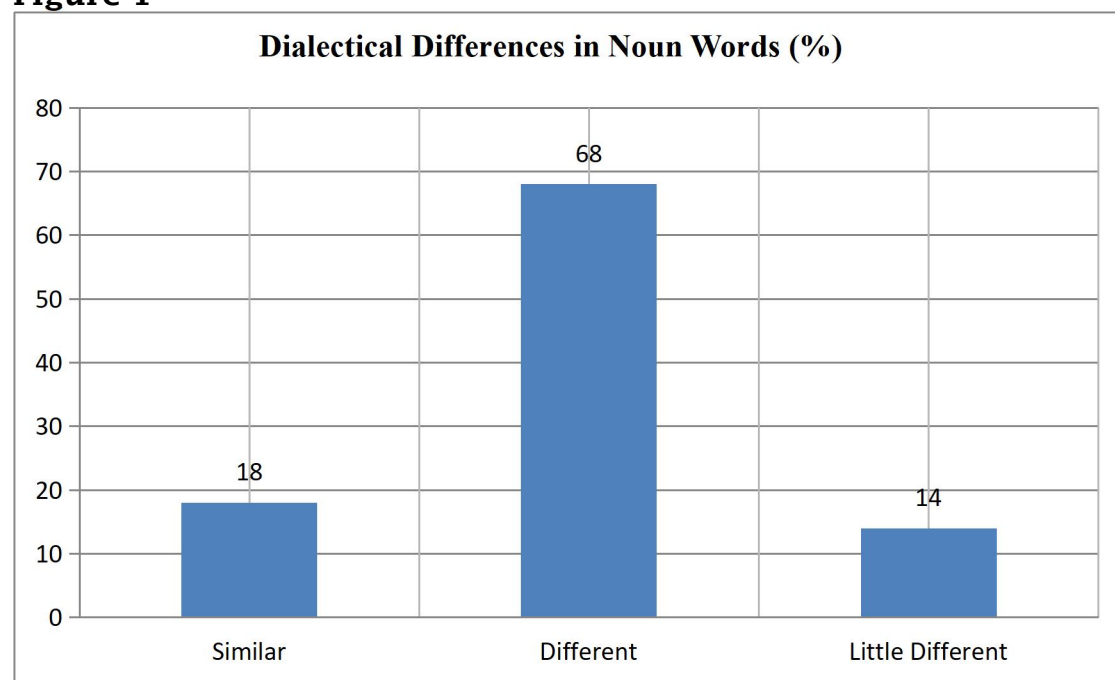
As the above result cannot be generalized on these dialects as a whole, it was impossible for the researcher to select all the words from both dialects in a single study which is unlimited. Thus, only two lists with limited words were selected for the current study. In the above table eighteen percent words, in both target dialects of Pashto are lexically similar in the list of noun categories. The value and percentage of similarity of these words describe the level of mutual intelligibility between both dialects, which means that speakers of both dialects can properly communicate with each other only eighteen presents out of hundred in the use of nouns. For instance, *heart* is a noun for which both dialects have one common word *zera*. Here they successfully understand message of

each other. In this area these dialects share words between them. The similarity in the use of nouns in both dialects has a low ratio of eighteen percent which is however not that much high to reveal much similarity between these two dialects. However, one cannot ignore the fact that this similarity in the use of lexical items shows that these two dialects have something in common which make them dialects of the same language. In the same table, fourteen percent words are those which are based on little difference, and this little difference is phonological, rather than lexical difference. This difference is not more enough. The low percentage with fourteen indicates that the sound system of two dialects is almost same with little differences. The word *chair* is *kursey* in Yusafzai dialect but the people of Banuchi dialect call it *kursi*. Here the words seem similar, but a little bit of change is found between both which is the difference in sounds. In the use of nouns this little difference in phonology shows that these two dialects also have common words with a little difference of sounds. The same table contains sixty eight percent words for which totally different lexemes are used in both dialects. Therefore, in the use of nouns, there are sixty eight percent lexical differences between both dialects. The difference of sixty eight percent out of hundred clearly indicates excessive level of mutual unintelligibility, which shows ineffective communication between speakers of both dialects in the use of nouns, pointing communication difficulties which can be the failure of encoding and decoding of message in both dialects because this tendency shows here that these differences in the use of nouns create complications for target speakers to understand each other. The example of this difference in use of nouns between these two dialects has been presented by the researcher here to make this change clearer. The translation of *monkey* is *shado* in Yusafzai dialect and *bizo* in Banuchi dialect. These two words are totally different from each other which create confusion among the speakers of these dialects. The high percentage of these changes makes a person to think these two dialects as two different languages as early the researcher discussed in literature review that if the speaker of one dialect has complete difficulty understanding the speaker of another dialect, it is the sign of a different language rather than a different dialect. In the case of these two dialects, the study reveals a high percentage difference but still we cannot say that there are two different languages, rather we claim that these are two different dialects with the percentage of great variation in the use of noun (lexical differences).

The lexical data collected by the researcher through interviews of the speakers of both dialects is presented in the following bar chart which shows the similarity, difference and little difference between both dialects through the blue bars. The chart contains three bars, two of them show that both dialects are understandable for each other in the sense that they are eighteen

percent similar, fourteen percent of words are of little difference, but the major blue bar of sixty eight percent indicates the difference between both dialects. All these percentages are described above in detail.

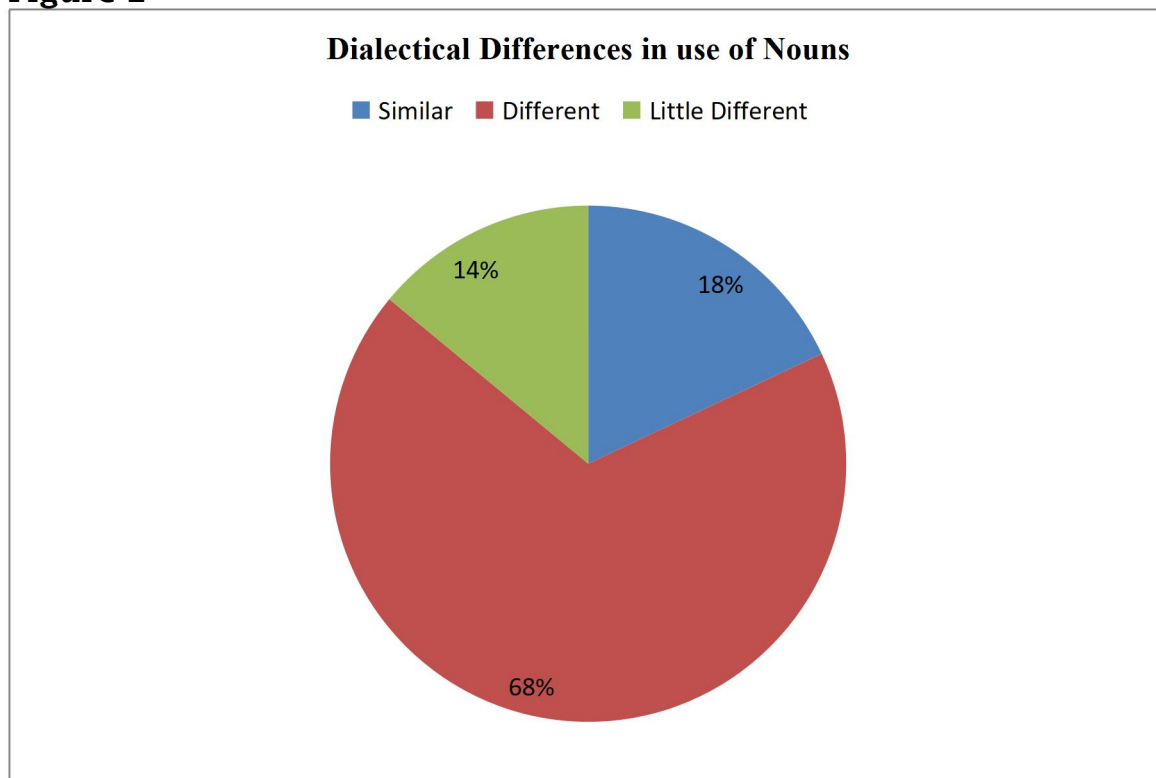
Figure 1



As the researcher mentioned earlier that she found the data in three statuses (similar, different, little different) after comparison of the information gathered from Yusafzai speakers with the records collected from Banuchi respondents. Therefore, with the help of these positions the data has been analyzed through pie chart too.

The following figure also presents the percentages for the positions in the use of nouns.

Figure 2



The above pie chart contains three different parts. These three parts are actually the three positions of the nouns which are presented here with the percentage after the comparison of the data between both dialects. The blue part of the pie chart indicates a percentage of eighteen out hundred with the position of *similar*. This blue part represents the understandable area of the speech in the use of nouns between both target dialects, where the speakers of these two dialects face no problem that disturbs their communication with each other.

The green portion of the pie chart shows the status of little difference with the percentage of fourteen out of hundred which describes that both dialects are fourteen percent little different from each other. By this little difference it is clear that both dialects possess some nouns which are of low level of difference from each other in both dialects. Therefore, this green part with a little difference represents that area of both dialects where the speakers of these dialects neither understand the speech of each other successfully nor face any serious issue when they communicate. They comprehend each other speech but not perfectly.

The red piece is more than half of the pie chart which describes the difference between both dialects in the use of nouns with the percentage of sixty eight out of hundred. This red portion of the pie chart is the biggest one among these three parts which refers to that area of both dialects where speakers of these dialects face problems during communication with each other. Here mutual unintelligibility occurs and as a result communication fails.

Conclusion

This study hoped to answer the questions and objectives of the research. The first question was that what problems are faced by the speakers of the two dialects due to lexical differences? It is clearly noticed in the analysis chapter of the present study that speakers of both dialects face conversational problems due to the high level of variations while communicating with each other. These lexical differences are the problems faced by the speakers of both dialects. As the researcher has given the example of word *sheerak* and *brasthan* too in the chapter of literature review, which created confusion between the Banuchi speaker and speaker of Yusafzai in grasping each other's discourse properly. Therefore, the main problems are the comprehension of speech between speakers of both dialects. The percentage of this difference in the analysis chapter proves the difficulties between both dialects.

The second question was that to what extent lexical differences exist in Banuchi and Yusafzai dialect? It is noticeably clear in the present study through interviews that both dialects are lexically different from each other. This difference between is noticed in the use of noun. But the overall difference between both dialects is too much and bar graph of difference is higher than similarity between these two dialects. Therefore, the reason for communication difficulties between both dialects exists at a higher level.

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